

Our Living and Our Dead.

VOL. I.

NEWBERN, N. C., WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 1873.

NO. 12.

REMINISCENCES OF THE LOWER CAPE FEAR.

BY X.

Early in September 1861, being convalescent from a protracted illness, I called by request on Col. S. L. Fremont, at Wilmington, who informed me that on the 20th of August, the commissions of officers, not attached to the companies, had been revoked by the State, and therefore I "was out of commission" as they say of old naval hulks; that he, himself, was a mere civilian in command; that Capt. Winder had remained at his work, although in a similar plight; that Capt. Childs, who had rendered invaluable service had been ordered South; and that he desired me to go on duty as speedily as possible.

Thus it happened that soon thereafter, I found myself at the mouth of the Cape Fear. Winder, for convenience and for other considerations, had located himself at Smithville, where I likewise sought quarters removed from the garrison. At that time, through his energetic action, Fort Caswell had come to wear a very different aspect from its former appearance in the "piping times of peace"; the citadel, it was said, had been rendered bombproof; the magazines were greatly strengthened; heavy traverses, &c., had been erected; the meat put in thorough repair, and the extensive basin in front of the fort was ready to be flooded, with from four to six feet of water, at the first making of the tide.

Battery Campbell, then intended as a mere outpost, was under way. Zeke's Island had been delivered over in prime condition to a garrison, and was under command of the indefatigable Hedrick. At Confederate Point early in May, Capt. Bolles had thrown up a small fortification, known as Battery Bolles; and Capt. DeRosier had assumed command of it.

To arm it, the Wilmington Light Infantry rolled their heavy ordnance a considerable distance through the deep sand on the Point, and performed other labors that seemed equally incapable of accomplishment in the absence of ordinary facilities. Their great zeal led them into arduous undertakings, but their perseverance and industry crowned their endeavors with marked success.

Another fortification was now in progress further to the North and near the site of an old work, perhaps of 1812; this I think was under the command of Lieut. Col. Meares. It was called after the lamented Fisher, and its history and fate well perpetuate the name of that noble spirit—a veritable *Bayard*.—*Sans peur et sans reproche*.

Capt. Winder's plan of defenses, if I recollect aright, embraced, besides a fortification on the bank opposite Zeke's Island; another higher up, afterwards known as Fort Anderson; and on Confederate Point a fine earthwork, terminating in a strong redoubt at the head of the Sound. As a ground work for the future execution of this plan, he erected Battery Gadsden near the head of the Sound, and Battery Anderson near Fort Fisher. These were to be enlarged, strengthened and perfected as occasion permitted; and then connected with Fisher by a series of breastworks, behind which a protected military road was to pass to the rear of redoubt. At Fisher, he was about to construct casemates with palisade logs brought from Smith's Island by Mr. Frielow.

Such was the condition of the defenses on the first day of September. As for the troops, the various commands were orderly and well-drilled.

Lieut. Col. Brown had established "regular army" discipline at Fort Caswell; Col. Iverson's soldiers at Fort Johnson were models of precision in their various exercises; and the others vied with these in regularity of conduct, subordination and obedience to authority.

About this time, Mr. Easton of Charleston, brought us a machine for rifling cannon by hand. Rifled ordnance was then a novelty with us; we apprehended that by the operation the old guns might become so weakened as to burst on slight provocation—and were fearful lest the experiment would cost us both guns and men. But the almost incredible reports of the effectiveness of rifled cannon in the Italian campaign decided us to try one gun. In about twelve hours an old smooth bore 32 pdr. was converted into a bran new rifled cannon throwing a 64 pound projectile.

The garrison turned out to a man to witness the trial, and as the smoke cleared away, each successive discharge fired with increasing charges of powder, they "made the welkin ring" with their shouts of applause. Being satisfied with the result, we went to work with a will, and kept the machine going, night as well as day, until a proper proportion of the guns were rifled. By this means we soon increased the weight of our metal, and felt relatively more capable of coping with the enemy's vessels.

Not confined to any particular point, I led a kind of nomadic life; sleeping habitually at Smithville—but off early to such posts as required attention—freed from the restraints of supervisory authority and not often thrown in contact with either officers or soldiers.

Winder had as a boatman an old colored worthy, yeelp "Clem," whose little craft carried us safely across the harbor in storm or sunshine with equal safety. These trips were not always unattended with danger; but when the weather was pleasant, they were extremely delightful. Indeed the harbor is unsurpassed for sailing, while the historic associations of the locality invested with a peculiar interest, each point on which the eye can rest. And this the more, as the scenes that would suggest themselves to my imagination were in harmony with the circumstances that surrounded me. I could in fancy trace the movements of the skillful Rhett as he in the summer of 1718, engaged the well armed Pirate "Revenge"; now bearing across the channel to deliver a broadside; now receiving the murderous fire of his antagonist; and then enveloped in a cloud of sulphurous vapor, clearing his ship, encouraging his brave Charlestonians, and preparing for a more decisive encounter; until at length after six protracted hours of desperate battle, he grapples

with the enemy, and Steth Bonnet, the last of the Cape Fear pirates—"a gentleman a man of honor, a man of fortune, and one that had a liberal education"—delivers himself up with his followers to grace the well-earned gibbet.

Looking to the northward, there could be discerned the solitary "sugar loaf" where tradition hath it, that "Old King Roger Moore led his faithful servants to the last battle with the Indians of the Cape Fear, and by his victory won the future peace of the infant settlement. That he so thoroughly settled that unpleasantness, is not a subject of amazement, as we have the sworn testimony of Sir William Cole that his grand father, "Roger Moore, with Sir Phelim O'Neale, destroyed 104,700 of their enemies in Ulster," during the quarter ending December 31st 1641.

On casting the eye to the southward one could recall the approach of the Spanish Cruisers as they entered the harbor in 1748.

At first they engaged Ft. Johnson, then but newly erected, and then their shot with precision into the midst of the fortified garrison; but the guns of the Fort belated forth fire and destruction, harmonious to the fierce emotions of the colonists. These know that now they fight for their homes and firesides—and in quick succession, let fly the iron thunderbolts of war.

But the Spaniards, long detained at sea have more appetite for plunder, than stomach for fight. They leave glory for another day, and seek the better things of life. With sails sheeted home, they stand across the channel, running the deadly grandflet, and find safety in their heels. And now they hasten to the prosperous village of Brunswick, all astride with the impending calamity. Here they pillage and plunder, and in fenced security prey on the rich spoils of wealthy planters. But the battle is not always to the strong. The brave colonists renew the fight, and the God they worship, smiles on their endeavors. They make sad havoc among the enemy, blow up one of the cruisers, and achieve a signal victory. And now the danger being past, with thankful hearts they consecrate their spoils to holy uses, and with Spanish booty erect churches to the greater glory of Him who in the hour of need was their shield and sure defense. It is said, a single moment of these heroic struggles, a picture of the Holy Virgin perhaps, yet adorns the vestry room of St. James at Wilmington.

From the water, there looms up that same Fort Johnson, now rehabilitated in all the paraphernalia of warlike attire; and in the sight of it carries my thoughts back to July 1775, when John Ashe, an ardent rebel led his neighbors to its destruction. His Majesty's most loyal Governor having led to his shipping, witnesses of the demolition and read in this, during the day the revelation of his authority, and knew by the token of the bird times that the fires of determined resistance were burning in the hearts of a free people.

What native of the Cape Fear section could then in 1861, recall these scenes, and the hundred other deeds of the past, that faithfully illustrate the character of his people, without feeling a strong desire to assimilate himself to the heroic actors—without being strengthened by a recollection of their success, and inspired with a more robust fortitude and patriotism by a remembrance of their virtues?

But to return: Winder was, about a month afterwards, relieved by Capt. R. K. Meade of Va., an officer of great merit in his department, as well as of most excellent sentiments. He had found himself at the crisis of affairs, in April, in company with General Anderson at Fort Sumter.

The duty of these gentlemen led them to protect the flag of their government, intrusted to their keeping, while in the face of its enemy. But he, as well as Gen. Anderson, as I understood him, fully determined to resign their commissions in the U. S. Army as soon as possible after returning to New York. However the General's wife, carried away by the honors showered upon the hero of Sumter, persuaded him to forego his determination; but Meade's heart was with his people; he retired to secluded quarters where the hero-worshippers of the metropolis could not trace him; discharged his last duty to the U. S. Government; boldly sent forward his resignation; and hastened to the loved fireside of his boyhood. He served acceptably wherever he was employed, but alas! fell a victim to disease in the trenches around Richmond at too early a period of the struggle to win and wear the laurels he would inevitably have earned.

In November Col. Fremont gave place to Gen. Anderson of Richmond, whose military family were, I believe, all E. P. V's. The General was amiable pleasant and patriotic; a man of culture as well as of brains; but Col. Fremont's energy, practical views, and military knowledge were matters much more to the purpose.

It seemed that the service felt the change. Having at once represented to Gen. Anderson my anomalous position, he promised to have me relieved; but weeks passed without bringing the Virginia officer, and circumstances occurring which justified my departure, I sought another field of labor.

"None," William Rhett, the ancestor on the mother's side of the Southern of Brunswick county, who subsequently I am informed, assumed their mother's maiden name and became the famous Rhett family of more recent time.

Their ancestor Thomas Smith, a man esteemed for his wisdom and sobriety was appointed Governor of the Southern portion of the Province in 1691; to render him eligible under Locke's Fundamental Constitution then in force, the Lords Proprietors invested him with the Landgrave, and made him a grant for the necessary four parishes of 12,000 acres of land each. This grant for \$8,000 acres, it appears, was located on the Cape Fear, and seems to have been the first grant located on that River.

To Advertisers. We offer a few column's space to our North Carolina friends to communicate with our numerous readers from seaboard to mountains. It is only necessary to state, what we believe to be a fact, that "OUR LIVING AND OUR DEAD" is read in more different localities in North Carolina than any other paper, to induce all who desire to seek customers to avail themselves of this offer.

Southern Star Poetry.

THE DEVIL'S VISIT TO "OLD ABE."

REV. BY E. P. BIRCH, OF LA GRANGE, GA.

Written on the occasion of Lincoln's Proclamation, for prayer and fasting after the Battle of Manassas; Revised and improved expressly for the La Grange Reporter.

Old Abe was sitting in his chair of State, With one foot on the mantle and one on the grate, Now smoking his pipe, and then scratching his pate; For he had heard some disastrous news of late, As fearful as death, and as cruel as fate, In an old earthen jug, on a table near by, Was a gallon of "Black-Eye," or choice "Old Rye."

To cheer up his hopes which were ready to die, Under whose potent charms old Abe would be able, To lay all his griefs, like a bill, "on the table," Or, shut up his woes, like a horse, in a stable.

He sat in his chair, With a wo-begone air, Gazing at nothing with a meaningless stare, And looked like a wild beast just "skinned" in his lair.

His cheek bones were high, and his visage was rough, Like a muddling of bacon—all wrinkled and tough; His nose was as long, and as ugly and big, As the snout of a half starved Illinois pig; He was long in the legs, and long in the face, A Longfellow born of a long-legged race, Yet longing thro' grace, for a much longer space, 'Till he had finished his political wild goose chase—

Bringing wreck on his country, and endless disgrace, On the blockheads who'd placed him in the "very wrong place."

The news had reached him of rout and defeat, Of his "Grand Army" broken—of disastrous retreat; His best men were slain on the field of the fight; His legions were scattered with panic and fright, And his plans were all met with a ruinous blight; His treasury was bankrupt, his finances smashed; His credit was gone, and his bills were uncashed; His country with terrible foes still beset, Was trembling to ruin like a fabric of dirt, "I'm afeard," said Old Abe, "there's somebody hurt."

Thus sitting and thinking, 'Twixt smoking and drinking— His head on his bosom was gradually sinking, When a sound met his ear— So sharp and so clear, That he sprang to his feet—standing breathless

With his hand full of dread, and his heart full of fear, 'Twas not like the roll of the hurricane's thunder, Nor the earthquake that cleaves the tall mountain's shoulder; 'Twas not like the storm which tumultuously sweeps

Over the lone bending woods and the dark rolling deep; But a sharp, angry crashing; A confusion and clashing, Like things in general, pronouncedly smashing, "It's the devil," thought Abe in the secret of fighths,

"Or a rebel, 'marked battery,' on Arlington Heights!" On the wings of the midnight winds it flew, 'Till Washington City seemed all in a stew; It passed just before The "White House," door, And then died away with an explosive roar, "It's the devil," said Lincoln; and sure he was right,

For just at that moment there gleamed on his sight The glaze of a horrible sulphurous light, Enriching a form so ghastly and grim, That his heart ceased to beat, and his eyes grew dim.

That form stood before him, majestic and dread, With large cloven feet, and huge horns on his head, Mr. Lincoln was seized with a terrible quaking, And the bones in his skin were rattling and shaking.

Like the "dry bones," in the "Valley of Vision," With such a dreadful collision, As threatened to make a "long division" Of his body and members, without "legal decision."

How's your health Mr. Lincoln? said Old Nick With a grin; "I have only stepped in To renew my acquaintance with your honor ag'in; How are Stewart, and Scott, and good Mrs. L. I hope all your friends are still hearty and well. Thus saying, he seated himself in a chair, And gazed at Old Abe with an impudent stare, Took a drink of "hot lead," from a flaming sky-rocket;

Which he grew from the depths of his overcoat pocket; Consulting his watch with a dandyish grace, Said he'd make a quick trip thro' the regions of space, On the train of a comet, in a journey sublime, Over millions of miles in a moment of time.

"You, yourself," said the fiend, with a wink of his eye, "Can travel 'like blazes,' when danger is nigh. Your Grand Army, too, are distinguished for speed, And run 'like the devil,' in cases of need. But all this aside—allow me to state: I have come here with business momentarily great.

Which deeply involves your political fate. What means, Mr. Lincoln, this strange proclamation, In which you've invited the whole Yankee nation To fasting and prayer, and to humiliation? It is strange how a thrashing has altered your notions

And called into action your pious devotions, It seems to me, sir, you're a whimsical set, Ever twisting and turning, like an eel in a net, You flounder about, And turn in and turn out, Till my wits are puzzled to know what you're about,

And now in all candor, I must call your attention To the truths which at present you'll allow me to mention.

You know, in the first place, you owe your election To the aid and protection Of a demagogue crew who own my direction. I invented your platform, and gave it *celad*, About "niggers" and "freedom," and the great "higher-law."

From the top of this platform—outstretching below, I showed you the kingdoms which I would bestow If you and your party would only agree To fall down in worship and homage to me; Obey my directions, fulfill my commands, Spread carnage and death over all of these lands, By a horrible warfare, such as would win Success to my cause, and a triumph, to sin.

To all of these terms you most promptly agreed, And made them your grounds of political creed, I gave you my subjects—the best I have got, Such as Cameron, and Seward, and "Old Granny Scott."

Assisted by Greeley, and Bennett and Weed, As miserable scoundrels as Tophet could breed, To fix up a plan for "preserving the Union," In the bonds of a happy fraternal communion, By a terrible warfare of conquest and blood, Such as never was known since the day of the flood.

I gave you my minions from the parlors of hell, The ranks of your fearful grand army to swell; I stirred up the North with my vagabond crew, And set witch-burning Yankeeism all in a stew; With its isms and schisms—fanatical trappings—Its free-loving humbugs, and spiritual rappings; I called out its teachers, (Hypocritical preachers,) And demagogue screechers,

To marshal your legions to conquest and fame; But alas! to your shame, No victory came, But reproach and disgrace on the whole Yankee name.

Your armies went forth, but not to the battle; They went forth to plunder the fields of their cattle; To steal the young chickens, and capture the hens, (Like William Come-Trimble-Too,) and put 'em in pens.

In the pages of history, no loftier place Can be claimed for your thieving and cowardly race, 'Than to tell that you were valiant in stealing a hen, That ran in confusion from the presence of men, When at last your Grand Army was in for a fight, They were routed, defeated, and driven in flight, Overwhelmed with confusion, from the plains of Manassas;

Like a miserable pack of terrified asses, Was it for this that I labored with vigilant toil, To save faces of contention all over your soil?— To build up your party with lying pretensions, With demagogue tricks, and Chicago Conventions?

If this is the fruit of my labor and zeal, I am sure I deserve the remorse that I feel, For becoming the tool Of a shallow-brained fool, With the form of an ape, and the head of a calf, It is soving the whitewash and reaping the chaff, What say you to this?" cried Old Nick waxing hot;

Quoth President Lincoln, "You must ask General Scott." "Old Scott's an old ass, and Seward to boot, And, as for yourself, you're a pitiful brute, Too mean to let live, and too worthless to shoot."

"But, to come to the point more directly in hand, Allow me, once more, in good faith to demand The grounds of this pitiful vile proclamation, For fasting and prayer by the whole Yankee nation—

Do you think that Jehovah will favor your cause, While you murder, and steal, and violate laws? Will your prayers be heard when you ask the Eternal,

For help to accomplish your objects infernal? No; this war, like yourself, was begotten in sin, And lost its own begin, You must now begin, To fight with the spirit of "Seventy Six," And abandon your pitiful Yankee tricks."

Quoth "honest Old Abe," "I'm in a very bad fix, "You are right now, for once," said Old Nick with a grin, "But such are the fruits of transgression and sin; Then where lies the blame? Not with me, I am sure."

You made the disease; you must seek for the cure, And now, in conclusion your attention I call To a single fact more—"tis the saddest of all;" (As he spoke the hot tears came flush to his eyes,) "The Gospel has made me the father of lies,— And the record is true, From the very beginning, I have tortured the world with lying and sinning; But it stirs my soul with grief and vexation, To see your abominable Yankee nation, Outstripping me far in the depths of its shame, And bringing reproach on my kingdom and name."

"I've one word to add: it's a terrible one! The race of your treachery is almost run; Your political books are dark and dim; The fate clouds are gathering o'er your setting sun; You have ruined your nation—degraded its name, And hurled on its people a heritage of shame; You have murdered its glory and pride at a blow; And filled its proud cities with wailing and woe. The avenger is coming, O'er your dark future path,

Is brooding a storm of terrible wrath. The wrongs of oppression, the blood of the slain, The pleadings of widows for their lost ones again, The cries of the poor, all starving for bread, The curse of the nation, overwhelming and dread, Shall break like an avalanche full on your head. Then was to the day when Beauregard comes With his fiery legions from their Southern homes; When the roar of their guns shall fill you with fright; And the flash of their sabres shall gleam on your sight.

Ah! then shall you sink to a merciless tomb, And the shouts of their triumph shall herald your doom, Your fate is now writ by the 'hand on the wall'; O'er your house on the sand, the black tempest shall fall, And sweep you away in its ruins to hell. I have finished my mission, farewell! farewell!"

Thus saying he left in a moment of time, And wound up his speech, where I wind up this rhyme; He left General Scott in a passion and worry— Old Abe in a fit, and his wife in a flurry.

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(Raleigh Standard Wednesday July 31st 1861.)

VICTORY AT BULL RUN.

North Carolina Fully in the Fight.

Sherman's battery taken and silenced by

the 6th Regiment North Carolina State

Troops.

After several days of painful anxiety in

regard to the North Carolina Troops, we

are glad to be able to relieve that anxiety

by the following authentic account receiv-

ed on Saturday evening last from a brave

officer of the late Col. Fisher's regiment.

It will be seen that no regiment on the

closely contested field of Bull Run did

better service than the brave 6th regiment

of State Troops.

Many will be glad to read Capt. York's

letter giving an account of the wounded